



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

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Dan Hull, Chairman
David Witherell, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

Research Priorities for 2018 - Review and approve

STAFF CONTACT: Jim Armstrong (NPFMC)

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Review/Recommend Research Priorities for 2019-2023

BACKGROUND:

The Magnuson-Stevens Act (§ 302) requires that Fishery Management Councils identify five-year research priorities on an as-needed basis:

“Each Council shall, in accordance with the provisions of this Act -

(7) develop, in conjunction with the scientific and statistical committee, multi-year research priorities for fisheries, fisheries interactions, habitats, and other areas of research that are necessary for management purposes, that shall-

- (A) establish priorities for 5-year periods;
- (B) be updated as necessary; and
- (C) be submitted to the Secretary and the regional science centers of the National Marine Fisheries Service for their consideration in developing research priorities and budgets for the region of the Council;”

In accordance with Council procedures, the SSC and Council review research priorities each year at the Council’s June meeting. Prior to Council review, the Council’s GOA and BSAI Groundfish, BSAI Crab, and Scallop Plan Teams review existing research priorities and make recommendations for modifications or additions, as needed. Following the June meeting, the updated five-year research priorities are provided to the Secretary of Commerce, the Alaska Fishery Science Center, as well as research and funding entities including the University of Alaska, University of Washington, Oregon State University, North Pacific Research Board, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the Alaska Ocean Observing System.

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council’s research priorities cover a wide range of topics and are organized and managed within a publicly accessible database (<https://research.psmfc.org/>). Ranking of research topics is done using four priority categories: *Critical ongoing monitoring*, *Urgent*, *Important (near term)*, and *Strategic (future needs)*. These priority categories have specific definitions that emphasize the correspondence of research to the Council’s time horizon of management concerns (see **attached** Terms and Definitions). The current list of Council research priorities, as identified at the June 2017 Council meeting, is **attached** (Complete List of Research Priorities for Review).

2018 Review

Following its 2017 review, the Council expressed a desire to streamline its annual review process. In April 2018, the SSC and Council reviewed and endorsed a proposal on how to improve the process (see **attached** SSC report RP April 2018). According to that proposal, the Council's Plan Teams have identified a small number of projects that the Teams consider to be the highest priority this year (see **attached** Plan Team Top 10). At the June 2018 Council meeting, the SSC will consider the Plan Team recommendations, along with other "urgent" and "important" research priorities that have not been reviewed by the Plan Teams (for example, relating to the halibut fishery or seabird avoidance research priorities). The SSC will then compile a "top ten" list (the number ten is not set in stone) based on Plan Team recommendations, with a rationale for each research priority so that the Council review can achieve greater focus and depth. After Council review, the entire list of research priorities, with the top priorities highlighted, will be communicated to the usual research/funding entities and the Secretary of Commerce

Coordination with NPRB

At the June 2016 Council meeting, staff were directed to work with NPRB staff to identify ways to better coordinate the Council's research needs with specific research activities funded through the NPRB process. At this meeting, staff will report on progress related to the coordination of Council and NPRB research.

Catch Sharing Plan Research Priorities

At the April 2018 Council meeting, staff was asked to work with the SSC and / or Social Science Planning Team to develop a framework of the types of social/economic data that could be helpful when conducting the 2021 allocation review for the Halibut Catch Sharing Plan. The attached draft framework (see **attached** Catch Sharing Plan RP) has been developed by staff for SSC/AP and Council review.